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ABSTRACT

Despite the importance of activity programs in geriatric long-term care settings, there has been little investigation of the recreational needs, wants, and interests of male residents. A descriptive interview survey, which assessed self-reported leisure interests, time preference, and morale was given to 102 staff members and 55 male residents of a 473-bed multi-level residential care facility. Interests were dichotomized into Do Now and Would Like To Do categories. The number of Do Now activities reported correlated positively and significantly with functional ability, length of stay, and morale. No relationship was found between these variables and the reported number of Would Like To Do activities. Age and education were not significant predictors. Greatest interest was shown in Social, Sports, Educational/Cultural/Entertainment, and Nature activities. Least interest was shown in Volunteer, Craft, Organizational, and Collection activities. Nature and Trip activities were most frequently mentioned in the Would Like To Do category. Although congruence was found between staff and male residents' reports of residents' leisure interests, differences emerged between these groups on time preferences and the value of sex-segregated activities. Input is needed from both groups to insure adequate programming. (Author/NRB)

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Identifying the Recreational Needs of Elderly Males in a Residential Care Facility

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IDENTIFYING THE RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF ELDERLY MALES IN A RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY. G.C. Smith & E.V. Olson. St. John's Home, 150 Highland Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14620.

Clinical observations and a literature review revealed that the leisure needs of elderly RCF males have not been specifically targeted as an area of practice and research.

In this study, a descriptive interview survey was given to 55 male residents ($\bar{X}$age=82) of a 473-bed multi-level care RCF with 5:1 females/males. Self-reported leisure interests, time preferences, and morale were assessed. Interests were dichotomized into "Do Now" and "Would Like To Do" categories of activities. The number of "Do Now" activities reported correlated positively and significantly with functional ability, length of stay, and morale. No relationship was seen between these variables and the number of "Would Like To Do" activities reported. Age and education were not significant predictors. Greatest interest was shown in Social (65%), Sports (60%), Educational/Cultural/Entertainment (57%), and Nature (55%) activities. Least interest was shown in Volunteer, Craft, Organizational, and Collection activities. Nature (36%) and Trip (23%) activities were most frequently mentioned in the "Would Like To Do" category. A definite preference for scheduling recreation programs on weekdays vs. weekends was also found.

Implications for recreational programming for elderly RCF males are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the obvious importance and complexity that may be attributed to activity programs in geriatric long-term care settings, there has been scant systematic investigation concerning the recreational needs, wants, and interests of male residents. An important question to be answered via empirical research concerns the manner in which long-term care recipients vary in their choice of avocational activities, as well as how they are affected by them.

Gender has been recognized by avocational theorists (Overs, 1977) as a significant influence on one's choice of recreational activities. This variable has received similar attention from gerontologists (Bowker, 1982). Sex differences in avocational involvement may be particularly salient in long-term care settings where female residents typically outnumber their male counterparts by a marked degree. In fact, clinical observations and a comprehensive literature review revealed that the recreational needs and interests of elderly males in extended care facilities (ECF) have not been targeted as an area of clinical practice and research.

The present study was designed to address the following questions:

1. What are the leisure interests of male ECF residents as reported by residents and staff?
2. What are the time preferences for scheduling recreational activities among male ECF residents and staff?
3. What is the perceived value of sex-segregated recreational programming among male ECF residents and staff?
4. What major factors are associated with self-reported recreational interests by male ECF residents?

METHOD

Setting

This study occured in a 473-bed multi-level care non-profit ECF with a 5:1 ratio of female to male geriatric residents. The setting was composed of apartments for the well-elderly, an ICF, and a SNF. A number of specialized in-patient and out-patient geriatric health care programs were also available at this site.

Participants

Male Residents. Fifty-five male residents who were willing and judged competent (by nursing staff) were surveyed. This sample represented 62% of the entire population of 89 male residents. The mean and median age for the sample were both 82 yr., with an age range of 55-98. The mean length of stay was three years, with a median of two years, and a range of one month to 17 yr. Additional demographic information on this sample is shown in Table 1.

Staff. A total of 102 staff, representing all service oriented departments with direct resident contact were also surveyed.

Interviewers. Seven males from the ECF's Board of Directors served as interviewers. These men were involved in order to (a) have interviewers of the same sex, and within close age proximity of the male residents, and (b) provide Board members with "hands on experience".

Instruments

Leisure Interest Inventory (LII). This scale was developed for the present study and based upon a classification scheme of avocational activities appropriate for the elderly and disabled (Overs, Taylor, and Adkins, 1977). The LII divides 68 specific activities into 11 categories, as shown in Appendix A. For each activity, respondents were instructed to either (a) leave a blank (indicating no interest), (b) check the "Do Now" column (indicating presently engaged in activities), or (c) check the "Don't Do Now, But Would Like To" column (indicating desired activities).

Affect Balance Scale (ABS). This 10-item forced-choice scale is a measure of subjective well-being (Bradburn, 1969).

Survey Form. The survey administered to the male residents consisted of a semi-structured interview that covered their reactions to various aspects of the ECF's recreational programming.

Procedure

During March-April 1984, the male residents were interviewed individually within their own room or apartment. They were assured of their anonymity and their right to end their involvement in the study at any time.

Staff participants were administered the LII by their respective department heads. They were asked to answer anonymously, and to respond as if they were "in the shoes of the male residents". This was done to determine the degree of staff awareness concerning the recreational preferences of male residents. Several survey questions asked of residents during their interviews were also presented to staff in written form.

RESULTS

The results are presented vis à vis their correspondence to the major questions of the present study:

What Are The Leisure Interests of Male ECF Residents as Reported By Residents and Staff?

Table 2 presents the 20 "Do Now" activities that were most frequently checked on the LII by residents and staff, respectively. As indicated by asterisks, there were 16 (80%) activities which overlapped these two groups.

Table 3 shows the 20 "Would Like To Do" activities most frequently checked by residents and staff. Asterisks reveal that 11 (55%) of these activities occured in the top 20 for both groups.

Data analysis was conducted to collapse responses to specific activities into the 11 categories found on the LII. Table 4 gives the ranking of these activity categories for the amount of "Do Now" interest indicated by residents and staff. Similar rankings for "Would Like To Do" activities are shown in Table 5.

What Are The Time Preferences for Scheduling Recreational Activities Among Male ECF Residents and Staff?

Variance in time preferences was clearly found between the male residents and staff. As shown in Table 6, residents expressed a preference for weekday activities, while staff were oriented towards time of of day (i.e., afternoons, especially on weekdays and Saturdays).

What Is the Perceived Value of Sex-segregated Recreational Programming Among Male ECF Residents and Staff?

Figure 1 shows how male residents and staff selected among response alternatives that accompanied the question: "How important do you feel it is to have separate recreational activities planned for men only?" The majority of staff attributed considerable importance to male only activities, while male residents were divided over this issue.

What Major Factors Are Associated With Self-reported Recreational Interests By Male Residents?

The male residents' self-reported activity scores (i.e., total "Do Now" activities checked on the LII) were found to be positively and significantly correlated with subjective well-being, health status, and length of stay. These findings are displayed in Table 7, where it is also seen that the extent to which male residents perceived their recreational needs as being fulfilled was negatively correlated with their self-reported activity scores. Age and education were not significant predictors of self-reported activity. None of the variables mentioned above were significantly correlated with the amount of the male residents' self-reported "Would Like To Do" activities.

DISCUSSION

Implications for Recreational Programming

The activity categories which appeared to capture the interest of the male ECF residents were "Social", "Sports", "Education/ Entertainment/Personal Growth", "Nature", "Travel/Trips", and "Games". Relatively little interest was expressed for "Arts and Music", "Volunteering", "Crafts", "Organization and Clubs", and "Collections".

"Social" activities ranked number one as "Do Now" interests. This is not surprising since "it is well established that social interaction, in one form or another, is the single most important recreation activity among the elderly" (Iso-Ahola, 1980). It is noteworthy that "Social" activities on the LII were primarily of the informal sort (e.g., visiting friends and relatives). Formal social participation, like that of the LII category "Organizations/Clubs" appeared to be of little interest to the male residents.

"Nature" and "Travel/Trips" were the two most popular "Don't Do Now, But Would Like To" categories for the ECF males in this study. Since both categories require venturing away from the institution, these results may suggest a desire for more exposure to the external environment.

In the present study, considerable congruence was found between male residents and staff for their reports of residents' leisure interests. On the other hand, clear differences emerged between these groups on time preferences for recreational programs and perceived value of sex-segregated activities. Thus, it appears that input is needed from both groups to insure adequate programming.

The findings of the present study also suggest that individual differences between male residents may strongly influence their enjoyment and participation in recreation activities. It appeared that the more functionally able men engaged in more activities

than their less able counterparts. However, the more competent men also reported the least fulfillment from their involvement in these activities. For ECF males, then, these results support the belief that

> with the exception of participating in some recreational activities and interacting with other patients, there are few opportunities that would challenge persons of moderate or high levels of perceived competence... As a result, it is not uncommon to find that some of the most capable persons in such institutions are also some of the most dissatisfied and unhappy (Schulz and Hanusa, 1980, p.42).

Limitations of the Present Study

Several shortcomings of the present study limit the generalizability of the findings and conclusions. All data were self-reported and, therefore, lacked the objectivity that would have been characteristic of observational and service utilization data. With the exception of the ABS, this study also involved unproven research instruments with unknown reliability and validity. Finally, the male residents and staff samples may not have been representative of their respective populations.

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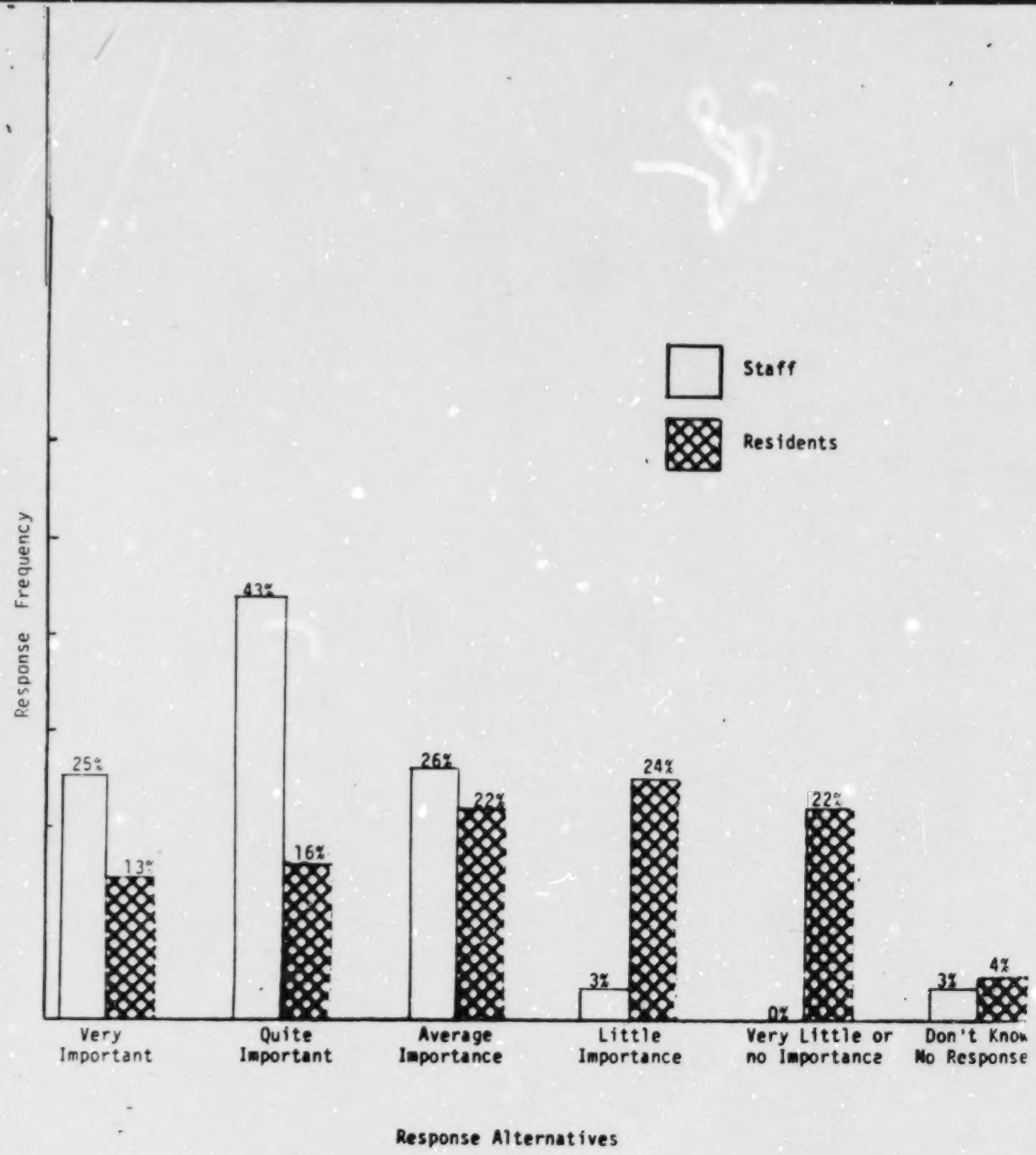

Figure 1.
Frequency of response alternatives by staff (N=102) and residents (N=55) to the question: "How important do you feel that it is to have separate recreational activities at St. John's Home planned for men only?"

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TABLE 1

Demographic Summary of Male Residents Participating in Study

(N=55)

Variable	n	%
Location		
1972 SNF	20	(36)
1975 HRF	19	(35)
1960 HRF	11	(20)
Apartments	5	(9)
Education		
Grammar School	21	(38)
High School (Some or Completed)	17	(31)
College (Some, Completed, or Beyond)	16	(29)
Not Reported	1	(2)
Marital Status		
Widowed	30	(55)
Single	8	(15)
Divorced	3	(5)
Married	12	(22)
Separated	1	(2)
Not Reported	1	(2)

Table 2

"Do Now" activities most frequently indicated by residents and staff

RESIDENTS (N=55)

Activity	n	(%)
*TV	48	(87)
*Visiting Friends/Relatives	45	(82)
*Watching Sports	40	(73)
*Holiday Parties	40	(73)
*Radio	39	(71)
*Birthday Parties	39	(71)
*Reading	33	(60)
*Religious Activities	32	(58)
*Telephoning Friends/Relatives	29	(53)
*Attending Entertainment/Drama Events	29	(53)
*Walking/Exercising	28	(51)
*Attending Musical Performances	27	(49)
*Movies at SJH	22	(40)
Target Games	19	(35)
*Picnics	19	(35)
Actively Observing Nature	18	(33)
Passively Observing Nature	17	(31)
*Trips to Parks and Scenic Locations	16	(29)
Card Games	15	(27)
*Singing	14	(25)
Interest in Previous Occupation	14	(25)

STAFF (N=102)

Activity	n	(%)
*TV	90	(88)
*Holiday Parties	85	(83)
*Visiting Friends/Relatives	84	(82)
*Birthday Parties	84	(82)
*Radio	83	(82)
*Attending Entertainment/Drama Events	80	(78)
*Reading	78	(76)
*Religious Activities	77	(75)
*Attending Musical Performances	77	(75)
*Telephoning Friends/Relatives	74	(73)
*Watching Sports	72	(71)
*Singing	72	(71)
*Movies at SJH	63	(62)
*Walking/Exercising	62	(61)
Discussion Groups	62	(61)
*Picnics	59	(58)
Table/Board Games	59	(58)
Volunteering at SJH	55	(54)
Trips to Movies	52	(51)
*Trips to Parks/Scenic Locations	52	(51)

Note: Asterisk denotes activities that were checked most frequently by both residents and staff.

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"Would Like To Do" activities most frequently indicated by residents and staff

Table 3

RESIDENTS (N=55)

Activity	n	%
*Fishing	24	(44)
*Backyard Activities	23	(42)
*Caring for Plants	20	(36)
*Actively Observing Nature	19	(35)
Passively Observing Nature	19	(35)
Trips to Sports Events	17	(31)
*Wood Crafts	16	(29)
Target Games	15	(27)
Table Games	14	(25)
Card Games	14	(25)
*Vacations	14	(25)
Trips to Movies	14	(25)
Trips to Parks/Scenic Locations	14	(25)
*Caring for Pets	13	(24)
*Attending Galleries/Museums	13	(24)
Movies at SJH	13	(24)
Trips to Concerts	13	(24)
Walking/Exercising	12	(22)
*Cooking	12	(22)
*Photography	12	(22)
Trips to Dramatic Events	12	(22)
*Trips to Zoos	12	(22)

STAFF (N=102)

Activity	n	%
*Fishing	64	(63)
*Caring for Pets	64	(63)
*Wood Crafts	60	(59)
*Actively Observing Nature	57	(56)
Leather Crafts	54	(53)
*Caring for Plants	50	(49)
*Photography	48	(47)
*Backyard Activities	47	(46)
Assembly Crafts	47	(46)
Collecting Models	47	(46)
Playing Sports	46	(45)
Attending Lectures/Courses	45	(44)
Political Organizations	45	(44)
Professional Organization	44	(43)
*Attending Galleries/Museums	43	(42)
*Trips to Zoos	43	(42)
*Cooking	42	(41)
Involvement with Previous Occupation	42	(41)
*Vacations	41	(40)
Hobby Clubs	41	(40)

*Note. Asterisk denotes activities that were checked most frequently by both residents and staff.

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Table 4

Ranking of General Activity Categories According To
Degree of "Do Now" Interest Indicated by Residents and Staff

Activity Category	Residents (N=55)			Staff (N=102)		
	n	(%)	Rank	n	(%)	Rank
Social	31	(57)	1	70	(69)	1
Sports	24	(44)	2.5	55	(54)	3
Education/Entertainment/ Personal Growth	24	(44)	2.5	62	(61)	2
Nature	10	(18)	5	26	(25)	9
Games	10	(18)	5	42	(42)	5.5
Travel/Trips	10	(18)	5	45	(44)	4
Art and Music	6	(11)	7	42	(42)	5.5
Volunteering	5	(9)	8	38	(37)	7
Organizations/Clubs	4	(7)	9	27	(26)	8
Collections	3	(6)	10	21	(21)	10.5
Crafts	1	(2)	11	21	(21)	10.5

Table 5

Ranking of General Activity Categories According to Degree of "Don't Do Now, But Would Like to Do" Interest by Residents and Staff

Activity Categories	Residents			Staff		
	n	(%)	Rank	n	(%)	Rank
Nature	20	(36)	1	54	(53)	1
Travel/Trips	13	(24)	2	31	(30)	6
Games	10	(18)	3	32	(31)	5
Sports	9	(16)	4	30	(29)	7.5
Crafts	8	(15)	5.5	47	(46)	2
Education/Entertainment/ Personal Growth	8	(15)	5.5	21	(21)	10
Art and Music	7	(13)	7	26	(26)	9
Volunteering	5	(9)	8.5	30	(29)	7.5
Organizations/Clubs	5	(9)	8.5	39	(38)	3
Social	4	(8)	10	9	(9)	11
Collections	3	(5)	11	37	(36)	4

Table 6

Frequency of response alternatives by staff (N=102) and residents (N=55) to the question: "At what times do you feel that the recreational activities at St. John's Home should be offered?"

	Time of Day					
	Mornings		Afternoons		Evenings	
Day of Week	Staff	Residents	Staff	Residents	Staff	Residents
Weekdays	41%	40%	77%	42%	53%	40%
Saturdays	29%	25%	72%	29%	48%	18%
Sundays	22%	11%	55%	24%	35%	18%

Note: Response alternatives were not mutually exclusive.

Table 7

Summary Table of Variables Found to Correlate at Statistically Significant Levels with Self-Reported Activity Scores

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level
Subjective Well-Being (ABS Scores)	+.27	.05
Health Status (Level of Care)	+.35	.008
Length of Stay at St. John's Home	+.26	.07
Perceived Degree of Need Fulfillment	-.27	.05